

1. (currently amended) A recording position adjusting pattern forming method for adjusting a recording position of plural printing heads, each head having a different color, for recording a color image on a recording medium, the method comprising:

assigning a first recording head of the plural recording heads as a reference recording head;

recording plural reference parallel bars on the recording medium with the reference recording head;

recording plural ~~parallel~~ bars on the recording medium with a second recording head of the plural recording heads, the plural ~~parallel~~ bars overlapping the plural reference parallel bars to form a recoding position adjusting pattern and including at least two bars with different inclination relative to each other.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising adjusting an inclination of the reference parallel bars which is due to inclination of the reference recording head.

3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the plural parallel bars have different inclinations respectively.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the plural reference parallel bars comprise a first set of plural reference pattern blocks and the plural ~~parallel~~ bars comprise a second set of plural pattern blocks.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 4 wherein the plural ~~parallel~~ bars of the second set of plural pattern blocks have different inclinations between each block ~~blocks of the second set of plural pattern blocks.~~

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6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the reference recording head is a black recording head for recording a black image.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
adjusting an inclination of the reference parallel bars which is due to inclination of the reference recording head;
adjusting a recording position in a scanning direction of a recording head between the respective recoding heads of the plural recording heads; and
* subsequently adjusting a recording position due to inclination caused between the plural recording heads by use of the recording position adjusting pattern.

8. (currently amended) An image recording apparatus comprising:
plural recording heads for recording images of different colors respectively on a recording medium,
a recording control unit that controls a reference recording head having a reference color of the plural recording heads to record plural reference parallel bars on the recording medium, and controls a recording head other than the reference recording head to record plural ~~parallel bars on the recording medium, between the reference parallel bars with overlapping~~ the plural bars including at least two bars with different inclination relative to each other and each of the two bars being recorded between adjacent bars of the reference parallel bars to thereby record a recording position adjusting pattern on the recording medium,
an optical detection unit that optically detects the recording position adjusting pattern recorded by means of the recording control unit, and
a recording timing adjusting unit that adjusts a recording timing of the plural recording heads of the recording control unit based on a detected output of the optical detection unit.

9. (original) The image recording apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the reference recording head is a black recording head for recording a black image.

10. (original) The image recording apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the optical detection unit detects the recording position adjusting pattern on a downstream side of a recording direction in a direction that intersects with a scanning direction of the plural recording heads.

11. (original) The image recording apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the image recording apparatus is provided with an operation starting instruction unit and an automatic execution control unit that automatically operates the recording control unit, the optical detection unit, and a recording timing adjusting unit based on an operation starting instruction supplied from the operation starting instruction unit.

12. (currently amended) A recording position adjusting pattern forming method comprising:

recording plural reference parallel bars on a recording medium by use of a first recording head of a color that is predetermined previously among independent recording heads of plural colors that are used to record a color image on the recording medium, and

~~recording plural parallel bars with different inclination respectively between adjacent bars of the reference parallel bars~~ by use of a second recording head of the independent recording heads, the plural bars including at least two bars with different inclination relative to each other and each of the two bars being recorded between adjacent bars of the reference parallel bars.

13. (currently amended) A detection method for detecting a recording position adjusting pattern comprising:

recording plural reference parallel bars on a recording medium by use of a first recording head of a color that is predetermined previously among independent recording heads of plural colors that are used to record a color image on the recording medium,

~~recording plural parallel bars with different inclination respectively between adjacent bars of the reference parallel bars~~ by use of a second recording head of the independent recording heads, the plural bars including at least two bars with different inclination relative to each other and each of the two bars being recorded between adjacent bars of the reference parallel bars, and

detecting the recorded parallel bars optically.

14. (original) The detection method according to claim 13, wherein the optical detection involves detection of a reflected density of the parallel bars.

15. (currently amended) An alignment method for aligning plural recording heads comprising:

recording plural reference parallel bars on a recording medium by use of a first recording head of a color that is predetermined previously among independent recording heads of plural colors that are used to record a color image on the recording medium,

~~recording plural parallel bars with different inclination respectively between adjacent bars of the reference parallel bars~~ by use of a second recording head of the independent recording heads, the plural bars including at least two bars with different inclination relative to each other and each of the two bars being recorded between adjacent bars of the reference parallel bars,

detecting the recorded parallel bars optically, and

adjusting a recording timing of the recording head based on the detection result.

16. (currently amended) The alignment method according to claim 15, wherein the recording of the reference parallel bars, the recording of the plural ~~parallel~~ bars with different inclination, the optical detection, and the recording timing adjustment are executed automatically.

17. (currently amended) An image recording apparatus provided with an auto-alignment mode for automatically executing an operation comprising:

independent recording heads of plural colors that are used to record a color image on a recording medium, the independent recording heads including,

a first recording head of a color that is predetermined previously among the independent recording heads, whereby plural reference parallel bars are recorded on a recording medium by use of the first recording head, and

a second recording head, whereby plural ~~parallel bars with different inclination respectively~~ are recorded ~~between adjacent bars of the reference parallel bars by use of the second recording head~~, the plural bars including at least two bars with different inclination relative to each other and each of the two bars being recorded between adjacent bars of the reference parallel bars, and

an optical device for detecting the recorded parallel bars optically, whereby a recording timing of the second recording head is adjusted based on a detection output signal from the optical device.

18. (currently amended) The alignment method according to claim 15 further comprising:

adjusting a recording position between the plural recording heads in the horizontal direction and vertical direction with respect to a carriage moving direction, and

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adjusting a recording position concomitant with reciprocation printing of carriage movement.

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